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Housekeepers' Chat

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "How to Reduce Your Weight." Information from Dr. F. J. Cullen of the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

This morning I am going to tell you how to reduce your weight. Yes, I am going to give away the secret -- the only safe methods of reducing weight known to the specialists in the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Are all the fat people listening, with bated breath? Are all the thin people listening, so that they can learn how to keep from over-weight? Are all the in-betweens listening? Then I'm ready to give away the secret: The only safe methods of weight reduction, known to the Department of Agriculture specialists are -- now listen carefully -- careful dieting, and proper exercise.

"Aw snucks!" wails Mrs. Stylish Stout. "Diet -- diet -- diet! Exercise -- exercise -- exercise! That's all you ever talk about! Isn't there some good quick way to get thin? I read in the paper about an anti-fat cure which guaranteed to reduce a person a pound a day. Then there was a soap advertised -- you use the soap where you want to reduce -- and it actually takes away fat. Do you really mean, Aunt Sammy, that not one of these fat reducers is any good?"

Yes, Mrs. Stout, I really mean it. And I happen to know that even this very day you bought a dozen tablets, for 75 cents, guaranteed to reduce fat at the rate of a pound a day. Twelve days, twelve pounds! Well, if there were any tablets in the world that could do such, safely, -- but there aren't.

No, Mrs. Stylish Stout -- there are no drugs, or mixtures of drugs, known to the medical profession, at the present time, that can be offered for the promiscuous use of the public, in reducing weight, without introducing an element of danger. That is the warning just issued by Dr. F. J. Cullen of the Department of Agriculture.

"But just look at all the ads!" says Mrs. Stout. "Don't you believe what you read in the papers?"

Not everything. I don't believe a single solitary ad that says bathing with Whosit's soap will make you slender, or swallowing Bunkum's pills will give you a girlish figure, or reaching for this instead of that

will ward off double chins.

Now let me tell you what Doctor Cullen says about these fat reducing cures.

"Promoters of so-called obesity remedies and fat reducing cures," says Doctor Cullen, "are attempting to influence fat people to spend money for worthless or dangerous preparations. The advertisements appeal to the vanity of persons who wish to regain slim, graceful figures, and also to the business necessities of those who become so fat that they can no longer do their work efficiently. The principal appeal of most of the promotion claims is that no dieting is necessary; the medicine is to do it all, and the advertiser says the patient can eat all he wants, and as often as he wishes, which is a strong inducement to most stout people.

"These preparations," explains Doctor Cullen, "frequently contain thyroid and laxatives. The promiscuous use of thyroid may prove very harmful, unless given under the advice of a physician, personally familiar with the subject's physical condition. We have on record an instance where death has followed an overdose of a preparation containing thyroid. Some preparations contain poke root, a poisonous drug, and others contain nothing that could possibly have the slightest effect in reducing flesh."

Did you hear that, Mrs. Stout? Does it remind you of the anti-fat medicine you bought last January? Well -- the bottles are empty, but I can't see that your silhouette has changed noticeably -- unless you've gained a few pounds.

Now let's see what Doctor Cullen has to say about a certain preparation which is claimed by its promoters to secure most marvelous results, by a process of elimination of foods without digestion. Says Doctor Cullen: "A preparation of this character, if it did what its makers claim for it, would probably eliminate any need of digestion in the future."

Then there is another product, examined by the Food and Drugs Administration. This product consists principally of soap -- ordinary soap. The idea is to apply this locally with friction, and thus remove the fat wherever it may be in excess. A still more clever scheme provides chemicals to be added to the bath water. These chemicals are of such a nature that they form a sort of curd in the water, after the patient has bathed. This curd, the advertisement states, is fat, and surplus tissue, removed from the body. Can you imagine anything more silly than that?

Other schemes offer tablets at 75 cents a dozen, which are claimed to reduce fat at the rate of a pound a day.

Says Dr. Cullen: "No other class of preparation, exploited to humbug the people, has a wider sale than these so-called fat reducers. Nearly all of the preparations are absolutely worthless. Other patients seem to lose weight, but this is to be attributed to the hot baths and the diet and exercises recommended to accompany the medication."

So there you are, Mrs. Stylish Stout -- and if you really want to reduce, you'll have to depend on the old reliable "careful dieting and proper exercise." They are the only safe methods of weight reduction, known to the Department of Agriculture specialists. And dieting and exercise, to be ef-

fective, must be continued for long periods. In many cases, other physical conditions make it unwise for fat people to try to reduce weight rapidly. As a general rule, fat people should diet and exercise under the guidance of a skillful physician. Loss of flesh is by no means a blessing, Doctor Cullen warns, if accompanied by loss of health, energy, or strength.

There used to be many preparations on the market, falsely labeled for reduction of fat. By exercise of its powers over interstate and import commerce, the Food Drug and Insecticide Administration has removed many of these worthless preparations from the market. Seizures and court actions have resulted in destruction of the goods, and, in some cases, fines for the manufacturers. Most manufacturers, have now revised their labels, to comply with the Food and Drugs Act. Do you see why it is important, to read labels? Labels must tell the truth.

Unfortunately, the Administration has no legal control over advertisements, circular letters, pamphlets, and the like, which do not accompany the package. So it is possible for unscrupulous manufacturers to make false claims in their advertisements.

For our protection -- for the protection of our families and ourselves, the Food and Drugs Administration advises us to compare the printed claims on the labels of such medicines with other claims made by the manufacturers. If what is said on the label does not agree with what is said in the newspaper ad, it is wise to depend on the label.

Sometime soon, we'll have another talk about labels -- and how important they are.

Tomorrow: "The Easter Bride Gives Her First Dinner Party."

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